

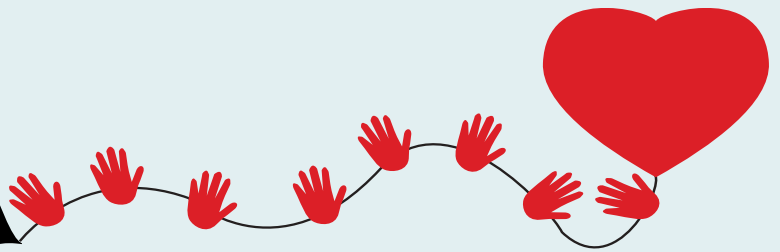


# Maricopa County CASA

Court Appointed Special Advocate Program Newsletter

[www.superiorcourt.maricopa.gov](http://www.superiorcourt.maricopa.gov)

January 2004



## Year in review for CASA program; Changes for 2004

It seems I was just writing this column to you and it's already been a year! And what a wonderful one it was for the Maricopa County CASA Program. We are so pleased with the past year and are looking forward to continuing the great work all of you are doing for your CASA children.

The program had great growth during 2003, both in the number of CASAs and in the personnel in our office. With it came some changes as well. We added Dee Dee Davis, our newest support staff. Our recruiter, LaDonna Benner, moved out of state, but we're welcoming Scott Butler into that position to start a phenomenal year of recruiting! Otis Evans, our Office Manager, left for FCRB, but that position is now in the capable hands of Rita Laird, who moved into it from her support staff position. We expanded the Durango office to include one more Coordinator, Judi Gross, and are excited as she works with veteran volunteers as well as building her base of new CASAs. January also brings with it a change in our Presiding Juvenile Court Judge, with Judge Linda Scott retiring this month and Judge Emmet Ronan moving into that position. Judge Scott will surely be missed, as her support and commitment to the CASA program was enthusiastic and unwavering. We look forward to the same in working with Judge Ronan.

As the CASA word spreads, our numbers continue to climb. We began 2003 with 205 active CASAs, and now begin 2004 with 238. With CASAs who are currently inactive in transition between cases, our total number of CASAs is now 280. We are presently serving almost 450 children, the most we have ever served. Our judges continue to appreciate and value the work you do.

We were busy last year! We held a wonderful Light of Hope Event in front of

the Superior Court downtown that featured Dan Levy from the Governor's office. Our Recognition Banquet in April served over 100 people, and highlighted community supporters of CASA, as well as giving special awards to individual CASAs. Our November picnics are always fun, and this year was no different. The Thetas were fantastic in their support of our CASAs bringing their kids to the park for a day of fun, games and good food. And in December we love our Holiday Party, where we can gather with you to spend time together on a social basis. Good food and a great sing-along! We hope to have the same events again this year, so keep your eyes open and if you haven't participated before, make plans to this year!

There has been so much talk, so much written and so much argued in the past few months about the CPS bill passed in the special legislative session. I know many of you responded to the State CASA Office and Children's Action Alliance requests to contact your legislators, and truly, you did make a difference. We heard it straight from the legislators. While the final bill may not be all we had hoped it would be, it addressed some critical areas in our child welfare system. But more needs to be done. I want to thank you all for committing part of your lives to our children. It is so easy sometimes to be "armchair legislators," to be a *viewer* of the action rather than a *doer*. You all choose to be an instrumental part of a system that needs work. You're not sitting and watching from the sidelines, you are "walking the walk" that gets things done for children. My belief is that it's going to take much more than legislative action to fix what's wrong. At no time has it been more important to be involved; to recognize that we all play a part in the solution.

Keep spreading the word that one person can have an impact.

I sometimes run out of ways to say "thank you" and it never seems to be enough. The CASA Program is so fortunate to be touched by you, and you continue to amaze us with your strength, persistence and loving hearts.

— **Bonnie Marcus**  
**CASA Program Manager**

### Goodbye to Judge Scott

After many years with the court, Judge Linda Scott, Presiding Judge of Juvenile Court, will be retiring this month. During her tenure as Presiding, Judge Scott was a great supporter of the CASA Program. Her attendance at CASA events, programs and brown bag luncheons showed us that she believes in what we do, that the children in the dependency courts need a voice to help them find permanency. Judge Scott's consistency and straightforward manner in dealing with people and issues will be greatly missed. She is an individual of great compassion, and we wish her well.

### New Judge in Mesa

Later this month, Judge Louis Araneta will be joining the Juvenile Court judges in Mesa. East valley CASAs, please note on your Report and Review notices if Judge Araneta will be your new judicial officer.

### Notify Office of E-mail changes

Please remember to keep the CASA office informed of changes in your e-mail addresses. It's easy to change providers, but it can slip our minds to let the office know of changes. It helps us to keep in good contact with you, and also helps us to provide the State CASA office with the most current list. Thanks for your help with this.

## Changes to peer group meetings, mentor program

After reviewing attendance at monthly Peer Groups, the CASA Program, in conjunction with the Peer Group facilitators, has decided to change the format of Peer Group meetings. The meetings will now be held quarterly, and will be facilitated by an invited host (a CASA) and a Coordinator. The Peer Groups will be held at both the Southeast Juvenile Facility (SEF) and the Visitation Center in downtown Phoenix on the same night each quarter. The Peer Group meeting dates can be found in your Yearly Training Calendar, included in this mailing. These meetings will be a great time for you to talk with other CASAs about case issues, resources and generally give and receive support for the work that you're doing for your CASA children. Hosts and Coordinators will bring any new resources that may be available to help you in your advocacy. A bonus is that you'll receive training towards your yearly requirement! Plan to attend our Peer Groups in this new format. Let the CASA office know when you plan to come.

Also undergoing some changes is the Mentor Program. When you became a new CASA, you were as-

signed a Mentor; a veteran CASA with experience and resources to share. Historically, the mentor relationship continued for the complete CASA experience. As the program grows, we have changed the emphasis of the Mentor Program to more specifically address our newest CASAs, to answer questions and offer support. As new CASAs reach their six-month mark with the program, mentors will no longer keep them on their active lists. This does not mean you cannot still call your mentor, however their primary focus will be on new CASAs coming into the program, to encourage them and help them get comfortable with their responsibilities. Below is a list of our current mentors, all of who are still open to calls from **any** CASA, no matter how long you've been with the program.

George Bressler ..... 480-219-5569  
Greg Broberg ..... 480-641-2964  
Bob Brunson ..... 602-787-2742  
Peiggi Clements ..... 602-249-1928  
Jackie Flowers ..... 602-265-3565  
Bob Herrmann ..... 480-488-2885  
Ken Pollock ..... 602-438-0551  
Marcia Rysdon ..... 602-942-5316  
Toni Schulte ..... 623-972-3074  
Flo Smithiger ..... 480-595-1981  
Linda Warfield ..... 480-575-6904

## Zoolights event recap

Over 150 CASAs, kids and staff attended the December 29<sup>th</sup> Zoolights event at the Phoenix Zoo. The CASA Program enjoyed the beautiful lights, the dancing trees, food and hot chocolate in our own CASA picnic area from 6 p.m.- 10 p.m..

Although it was one of the colder nights we've had lately, the kids seemed to enjoy the winter feeling, and many even got handmade knitted caps, made by the wife of our very own CASA Bill Oldham. Thank you to Mrs. Oldham for that wonderful gift to the kids.

The CASA Program is very appreciative of the private foundation that enabled us to facilitate this fun evening.

## CASA Contacts

### Durango

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Phoenix, AZ 85009  
FAX - 602.506.5512

Leslie Blakley 602.506.4082  
Scott Butler 602.506.3930  
Delaine Davis 602.506.4415  
Judi Gross 602.506.6315  
Rita Laird 602.506.4083  
Laurie Laughlin 602.506.3934  
Bonnie Lodato 602.506.6491  
Bonnie Marcus 602.506.5221

### Southeast

1810 South Lewis St.  
Mesa, AZ 85210  
FAX - 602.506.6570

Rita Flores 602.506.3935  
Grace Nabor 602.506.3379

## CASA Kudos

### From the Court and staff

Judge Michael McVey commended CASAs Sandra Perkins and Debora Celaya for their efforts on behalf of the children on their case.

Commissioner Brian Rees thanked CASA Judi Tennien for "going above and beyond" her role as the child's advocate.

Judge Linda Miles thanked CASA Flo Smithiger in open court saying she is an outstanding CASA. The GAL on the case also stated that Flo is a wonderful CASA and should be cloned.

### From the FCRB

The Foster Care Review Board commended the following CASAs for their continued dedication to the children on their cases:

James Lee  
Mary Powell  
Mary Catledge  
Lawrence Comeau  
Barbara Evans  
Linda Warfield  
K.C. Gill  
Janet Brandon  
Ralph Corson

### From the CASA Office

Kudos to Kaye McCarthy for all she does for the CASA program from obtaining complimentary tickets for CASAs to enjoy to helping out at our special events. We appreciate you, Kaye!

## Upcoming Events

### Feb. 6-7, 8 a.m.- 4 p.m.

New CASA Orientation Training  
AZ Supreme Court Building

### Feb. 7, 9 a.m.- 12 p.m.

CPR Training  
Southeast Juvenile Court, Mesa  
CASA Office (new building)

### Feb. 12, 6 p.m.- 9 p.m.

Post Orientation Training  
Durango Juvenile Court Complex  
Juvenile Probation Building, Rm. 223

**Please call the CASA Office for locations and to RSVP for all events.**